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VOLUME 41 ISSUE 1

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Photo Courtesy of Blake Buchanan/ Centrifuge Training

Centrifuge Training specializes in vehicle-based tactics (VCQB); low light and structure problem-solving; K-9 integration; ballistic shield performance-based skill building; range development/management/ operations, instructor development; and product consulting.

A special thanks to the Cobb County (GA) Police Department, as well as to BlueRidge Armor (shield manufacturer).

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HEROES AND VILLAINS

RAMESH NYBERG

A recent online news article bears the headline, "Why You Shouldn't Shoot Down a Drone."

Isn't it astonishing that people have to be informed that shooting at objects in the sky is dangerous? I'm seriously thinking of this for the plot of a novel: A man is found dead in his backyard with a bullet wound to the head. He was outside smoking because he and his wife had agreed there was no smoking in the house. There's no evidence around except a spilled glass of bourbon, a cigarette with a long ash and the dead guy. There are no empty casings – nothing. And, the hunt is on. Investigators get reports that someone was trying to shoot down a drone in the neighborhood and a "person of interest" is developed. *And*, in the shooter's yard, there are three casings upon which is written, "Die, drones, die."

Alright, let's get serious. By the time this column shows up in your mailbox, the New Jersey drone mystery will likely be solved. It might end up being a group of nerdy drone techies who are building gigantic drones and practicing for some majestic light show with which they want to wow the world. If it's not that, who knows? I doubt, though, that it will still be in the public eye. What *will* remain the buzz at happy hours and office water dispensers around the nation is the murder of Brian Thompson, the CEO of UnitedHealthcare. There is so much to unpack with this case that it makes one's head spin. I'll start with the scene and the evidence. How many cases have you been on that had writing on the cartridge casings? In 22 years of homicide investigation, I'll give you my count: zero. We did have one case in which the killer – the only serial killer Miami has seen in decades – wrote "Third! See if you can catch me" in black marker on the back of his third strangulation victim. But, casings? Never.

Also found near the scene was a backpack full of Monopoly® money and a water bottle, both of which have yielded DNA and fingerprint evidence now linked to the defendant, Luigi Mangione. Once all of this – especially the casings – came to light, we all knew we were in for a major media circus. We were also in for a deluge of support – even outright hero worship – for the defendant, Luigi Mangione. I read many comments on several YouTube videos about the shooting. Here are some:

"He's a hero. Set him free!"

"If you're charging him with murder, charge UHC with a thousand more!"

"Luigi for president!"

"We love you, Luigi – you did NOTHING wrong."

"Jury nullification – not guilty!"

"Not guilty – he was with me all day!"

"Look at the eyebrows – no way they match! Luigi is a scapegoat!"

"The corporate elite don't give a s—t about us. Now, they're getting what's coming to them."

And so on, over and over. The infatuation for what Luigi's fans believe is an achievement worthy of the Nobel Prize is only deepened by a widely held opinion that he is an attractive guy.

"No one that hot should ever go to jail!" one college girl giggled on a TV network interview.

"Yeah," the girl next to her said, "he couldn't have murdered the guy. I mean look at him" (more giggling).

I thought that, by 2024, we would have transcended the empty-headed naïveté which was so commonplace in the 1970s. Ted Bundy went to trial in 1978 for the strangulation and bludgeoning murders of two college girls in their Florida State University dorm. A third girl was nearly beaten to death during the attack. Ted Bundy's last murder victim was 12-year-old Kimberly Leach, whom he kidnapped from a middle school in Lake City, Florida. The courtroom was packed with young female admirers, craning their necks to get a peek at the also handsome Bundy. Perhaps a few pictures of Kimberly Leach's decomposed body would have emptied that courtroom in a hurry.

The breathless excitement by young women, as well as the widespread expression of "bro-mance" by young men who think shooting someone in the back is a heroic act, troubles me. It tells me people really haven't changed or learned much from history. It tells me that young women today are just as vulnerable to smooth-talking, sharp looking

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...AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

Continued from page 6

predators as they were 50 years ago. It also speaks to how hypocritical people can be when their emotions take over. I would hazard a guess that most of these people who have cloaked Luigi Mangione in godlike robes have also decried gun violence and are loud advocates for gun control. Along comes a child of the corporate elite with a homemade gun and he is given his own throne. It's remarkable.

Now, I know firsthand that our health care system is a maddening, frustrating shell game which has left most of us angry and hurting. I've had asthma medication denied (without any reason because they don't have to give one) and my wife has been denied medication for her severe migraines. A now retired homicide cop I'm good friends with had to take his insurance company to court more than four times to get them to pay for a ventilator his daughter needed to stay alive. There are thousands of stories and you probably have one. People have died because they couldn't get their medication or treatment covered. It's hard to argue against the belief that the health "care" system cares for nothing except gargantuan profit.

The question we have to answer, however, is this: Does a broken system turn us into a bunch of armed vigilantes? I understand the need for change – even the need to send strong messages – but to kill a man in cold blood sends the wrong message. If excused, it sets a precedent of mindset for others: A parole board lets a violent inmate out early on parole and the convict ends up raping and killing a young woman. These types of enraging stories happen repeatedly in the criminal justice system. So, then what…we start gunning down members of the parole board? We kill judges and jurors because they get it wrong?

Brian Thompson leaves behind two children, neither of whom have anything to do with what their father did for a living. He has now been erased from their lives forever. Sure, they are likely very wealthy and their financial life is probably taken care of, but a loss is a loss and it doesn't hurt any less for a family with money as it does for a poor one.

Corporate greed isn't going anywhere, Luigi or not. Things might be very different if Luigi's bullet – like one intended for a drone – missed its mark and killed a child. No one would be giggling and blushing about Luigi if that was the case. **P&SN**

Ramesh Nyberg retired from law enforcement in November 2006 after 27 years of police work. He lives in Miami and teaches criminal justice at a local high school. He also teaches regional law enforcement courses through Training Force, USA. He enjoys getting feedback from readers and can be reached at ramesh.nyberg@gmail.com. Also, Ram has written a new book, Badge, Tie and Gun: Life and Death Journeys of a Miami Detective, *which is available on Amazon in both Kindle eBook and paperback. You can find it by visiting* ***amazon.com/dp/B0CTQQKQTV***

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NRA 2023 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

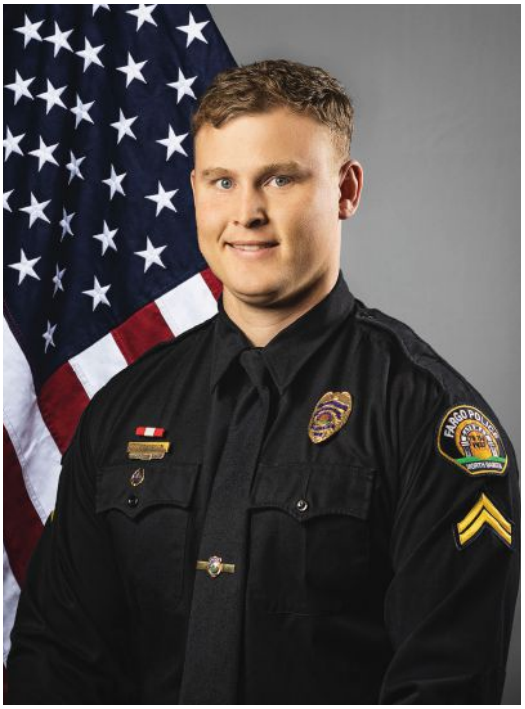
On Friday, July 14th, 2023, just before 3:00 PM, officers of the Fargo, North Dakota Police Department were investigating a traffic accident on a thoroughfare in Fargo when, without warning, they came under fire from an unknown assailant who was firing a .223 caliber rifle.

The assailant, who was parked facing the roadway in a nearby parking lot, began firing at three officers who had walked near his vehicle, striking all three. The suspect continued to fire as he exited his vehicle, also firing at the people involved in the collision, as well as the firefighters who responded to the crash. One of the three officers, Jake Wallin, managed to fire one round before collapsing.

Officer Zachary Robinson, who was standing in the street at the time the gunfire erupted, immediately saw the suspect and returned fire with his handgun while radioing for assistance and taking cover behind a vehicle.

Robinson continued to engage the assailant as he moved behind his vehicle. Officer Robinson advanced on the suspect, who was on the ground behind the vehicle, and commanded him to drop the handgun he now had in his hand. The suspect was unresponsive, as he had succumbed to his wounds.

Officer Zachery Robinson exhibited exceptional bravery and courage while facing the armed, violent suspect. Officer Robinson's actions not only saved his life, but the lives of fellow officers and citizens. As such, it is with great honor and pride that the National Rifle Association names Officer Zachary Robinson as the 2023 NRA Law Enforcement Officer of the Year!



Officer Zachary Robinson

Fargo, North Dakota Police Department

"Officer Robinson's commitment to protecting his fellow officers and citizens is a testament to his courage and demonstrates the very best of our Nation's finest who don the uniform of law and order. The NRA proudly supports the heroic men and women of law enforcement and we are grateful for their service to our country."

NRA President, Charles Cotton.

Forms for nominating candidates for the NRA Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award may be downloaded at http://le.nra.org/documents/pdf/law/leoy.pdf.

For more information about NRA's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award and its Law Enforcement Division, call (703) 267-1632 or send an e-mail to LE@nrahq.org.

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FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY

New Kinetic Breaching Tool Accessory

The Kinetic Breaching Tool (KBT) bridges the gap between traditional mechanical breaching, shotgun breaching and explosive entry. The KBT utilizes a proprietary .45 caliber handgun blank to deliver up to 850 ft lb of force through a hardened steel ram. Unlike explosive or shotgun breaching, however, all of the force is mechanically driven through a ram. The ramming surface is narrow enough to focus on a single hinge, yet powerful enough to breach steel security doors. The KBT has an eight shot cylindrical magazine and also provides for rapid reload. At a total length of just 36 inches, it can also be used in very confined spaces.

A brand-new accessory for the KBT is "**The Chomper**" head which rapidly cuts metal bars, chains and locks during high risk operations where speed is essential. The tool integrates seamlessly with all existing KBT Door Breaching Tools and is designed to cut through up to ¾" steel bars with ease. It features replaceable cutting teeth for extended usability and a quick-change adapter clamp. Equipped with a semiautomatic firing mechanism, the tool also includes an eight cartridge reloadable magazine.

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New Breaching Hammer

The new **BH** from J&N Tactical is a tactical breaching, demolition and utility hammer which is engineered with balanced weight distribution to ensure ease of breaching and carrying. It features integrated quick-release sling mounts for added convenience. Constructed entirely from steel, the hammer is powder coat primed and finished, with a textured poly resin coating which ensures long-lasting durability and a secure grip. Finished in OD green, it measures 27 inches in length and weighs 12 pounds. The hammer comes with a lifetime warranty, while the quick-release tactical sling is sold separately.

jntactical.com

BREACHING/FORCIBLE ENTRY EQUIPMENT

MX-MOD Halligan Bar

The **Maxximus-Mod (MX-MOD) Halligan Bar** is a one-piece, drop-forged forcible entry tool crafted from durable 4140 chrome vanadium steel. This fully "tuned" Halligan bar features a two inch wide adz for efficient gapping of doors and an adz cutout designed for easy marriage with an eight pound axe. Its square fork legs enable striking in tight spaces, while the thinner fork and adz design make it the slimmest tool of its kind. Depth gauge markings on both the adz and fork enhance precision and a molded T.P.R. grip reduces slippage while providing electrical insulation. With a standard length of 30 inches and a weight of 9.85 pounds, the **MX-MOD** balances functionality and ease of use.

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Maxximus II Halligan Bar

The soon to be available **Maxximus II Halligan Bar** is a cutting-edge, single-piece forcible entry tool forged from durable 4140 chrome vanadium steel. Designed with precision and functionality in mind, it features a redesigned adz and slimmer forks to effortlessly navigate tight spaces around doors. Weighing just 8.45 pounds, the tool is lightweight yet exceptionally strong. Optional welded rings allow for the attachment of a shoulder strap, adding convenience for transport. Depth gauge markings on the adz and forks improve accuracy during use, while a molded TPR grip enhances control, minimizes slippage and provides electrical insulation for added safety.

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New Breaching Ram

The **TR-1 Assaulter Breaching Ram** from J&N Tactical is a compact tactical breaching ram designed for interior rooms, allowing assaulters to carry it conveniently while navigating tight, confined spaces in structures or ships. Its balanced weight distribution ensures ease of breaching and carrying, and it features an ambidextrous, adjustable, quick-release sling for accessibility which comes included. The integrated front handguard offers protection during use, while the all-steel construction, powder coated finish and textured poly resin coating provide long-lasting durability and a secure grip. Finished in black-on-black, the ram measures 20 inches in length and weighs 22 pounds.

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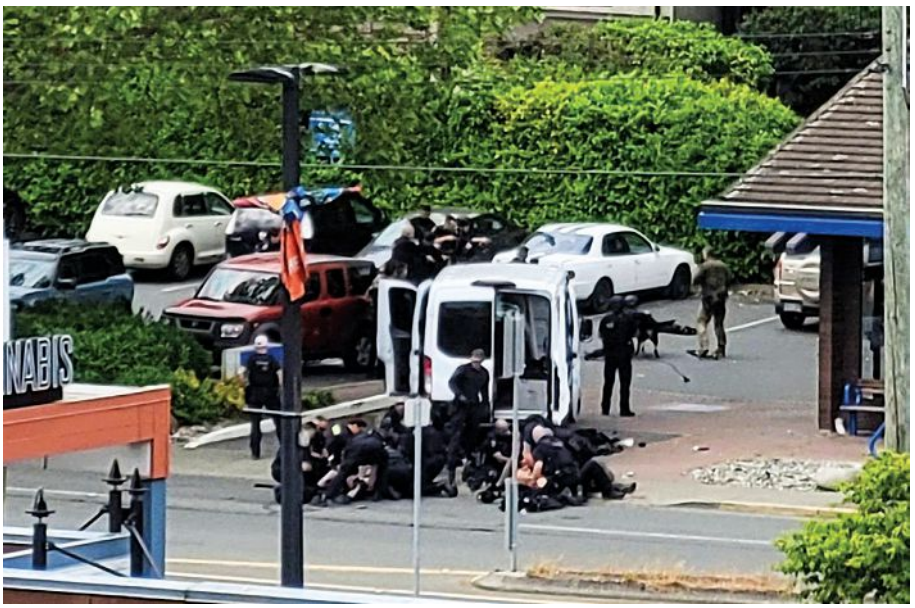
BANK ROBBERY AND POLICE AMBUSH: INSIGHTS AND LESSONS FROM THE DEBRIEF

This case deeply impacted me, not only because it involved a deliberate ambush on police officers which left six injured, but also because of the remarkable response from everyone involved, both during and after the incident.

JON B. BECKER

I have the honor of hosting a podcast called The Debrief with Jon Becker. The show, which is available on YouTube and all other major podcast platforms, is now entering its fifth season. The format of the presentation is a long interview show which features leaders from the tactical community, subject matter experts and, most importantly, tactical teams who have experienced a significant event. Every episode of The Debrief covers lessons learned from the incident covered. Over the course of four seasons, certain patterns of behavior and practices have emerged among the teams who have been successful during critical incidents. These patterns form the basis of a class I teach and a column I write for the NTOA's *Tactical Edge Magazine* called "Lessons Learned from The Debrief." In this article, we will look at four of those patterns through the lens of a single case from Victoria, British Columbia, which will be the subject of a series of episodes launching in early 2025.



BANK OF MONTREAL — SAANICH, BC 6/28/22

The city of Saanich, British Columbia, is a municipality with a population of just over 115,000 people. It is located on the southern end of Vancouver Island off the west coast of Canada and is part of the Greater Victoria Region adjoining Victoria, the provincial capital of British Columbia. Saanich has a crime rate about half of the average in British Columbia. Simply put, Saanich is a safe city.

On June 28, 2022, however, two suspects covered their bodies in armor and took a collection of weapons and explosives to the Saanich branch of the Bank of Montreal. The branch is a small residential bank branch located on the west side of north/south running Shelbourne Street. The bank's main door is off of its long narrow parking lot located to the bank's south and emptying out onto both Shelbourne and Pear Street to the south of the lot. The suspect's plan was to use the bank robbery as a rouse to attract and then ambush local police officers perhaps in an attempt to recreate the North Hollywood, California, shootout from 1997.

At 11:02 a.m., the suspects entered the bank, fired one round into the ceiling and forced all of the bank occupants into the back of the bank. They then set up in the entry vestibule, planning to ambush the responding officers. What the suspects hadn't planned on was that responding officers from nearby Saanich, Central Saanich and Victoria PDs did not rush into the parking lot overtly, opting instead for a covert deployment outside of the bank to avoid the suspects seeing them while inside the bank and thereby creating a hostage situation. Instead, officers took up covert positions around the bank waiting for the suspects to leave before they planned to engage them.

By coincidence, the Greater Victoria Emergency Response Team (GVERT), a regional SWAT team comprised of members from all three agencies, was working nearby as a quick response team in support of a narcotics surveillance. When the bank robbery in progress call went out, the team left the surveillance and headed to the bank. As they arrived on scene and attempted to gain situational awareness, the two male subjects, carrying SKS 7.62 x 39 rifles with high capacity magazines, exited the bank.

The assault team pulled into the parking lot in their surveillance van, while their detached sniper element set up at the bottom of the parking lot. As their van entered the lot, they deployed a flashbang and began to exit with an intent to form a tactical L on the suspects, seeking to effect arrest. However, when the flashbang deflagrated at the feet of the second suspect, he calmly turned and opened fire on the van. In just a few seconds, six of the seven operators in the van were shot, some of them multiple times.

All of them were injured and at least one of them was at immediate risk of death. Injuries to the officers were as follows: John had a GSW to his foot; Travis had a GSW to his thigh; Ben had a GSW to his upper leg with an arterial bleed; Steve had GSWs to both of his now broken legs, one to his left forearm, and an arterial bleed; Colby had been shot through the trapezius muscle and was bleeding profusely; and Damian had an

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The Greater Victoria Emergency Response Team

exposed compound fracture of his femur, a massive femoral artery bleed and had been shot through the side which had traversed his abdomen and was hindering his breathing.

The remaining team members, along with an army of patrol officers, immediately returned fire killing both suspects. They all then quickly transitioned to providing care for their injured teammates. What transpired over the next few minutes can only be described as a heroic performance. Everyone was treated and transported within minutes; the deceased suspects were taken into custody; the hostages were freed; and the suspects' car full of weapons and explosives was rendered safe. Because of their remarkable performance, all six injured team members survived and are now in various stages of their journey to complete recovery.

It is easy to look at this type of event and think "wow, they really got lucky" or "boy, they really rose to the occasion." But, to do so is to fail to recognize that this performance was far from an accident. Quite to the contrary, it was the direct result of rigorous preparation and training practices on the part of the agencies and team involved. Four of these practices are of tremendous value for teams preparing for future events.

LESSONS LEARNED #1

Prepare for the Worst – It Happens Fast!

The first lesson learned from this event is perhaps the most obvious and striking: When things go poorly, it happens very fast, is extremely violent and can be much worse than anyone expected. The total duration of gunfire in this incident was just seconds and the suspects opened fire on the police with no warning and no dialog between them. In fact, when the flashbang was deployed, the suspect nearest the van had no reaction to it other than immediately firing on the van. Many incidents covered on The Debrief involve multiple team casualties occurring within seconds of engaging the suspects. Proper preparation requires a mindset which assumes the worst will happen and strives to be prepared for it. The assumption for most teams in training is that they will always have the element of surprise and will have the tactical advantage in a takedown. There is, for

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some teams, an implicit bias in training that they will always get a warning when things are about to turn bad. That is simply not the case. A prepared adversary who is willing to die can engage the team unexpectedly and with overwhelming force. What's worse, at close range, the advantages provided by superior training and marksmanship skills are decreased or even eliminated. As the late, great firearms trainer Louis Awerbuck used to say, "Everyone shoots expert at five yards." The accuracy demonstrated by suspects can be exceptional and on par, or even better, than that of responding officers. As a result, it is essential that teams maintain a mindset which seeks to be prepared for the worst. Train for multiple officer casualties, weapon failures, being ambushed, close quarter gun fights, etc. In the words of GVERT Medic Mike Jarosz, "I had always believed that, if I was in an OIS, I would be in a position of advantage – like with a rifle and behind cover, overlapping arcs, etc. I did not think I would be knocked down to the floor of a van fighting for my life with a 9mm pistol." Fortunately, the GVERT team had adopted a mindset to be prepared for the worst and, when things went sideways, they were ready.

LESSONS LEARNED #2
Embrace Failure in Training

There is an old saying that, in a crisis, we do not rise to the occasion, but fall to the level of our training. This has been proven over and over by cases covered on The Debrief. As a result, it is important that training reflects real-world conditions and that it sometimes tests worst-case scenarios intentionally to produce failures. Failure is the best teacher. It shows us the limit of our skills; it forces us to think outside the box; and lessons learned through failing are often the most lasting because they are painful. Scenarios used in training must not all be winnable and they cannot follow a regular pattern. In other words, training cannot fall into a repetitive rut where scenarios always end in success. Training must be difficult (in fact, sometimes very difficult) and it must push the capabilities of the team to failure.

The GVERT team followed this guideline. In fact, the week before this incident, the team had run a training scenario

A glimpse of the Emergency Response Team inside their transport van

where one of their teammates, Damian Pellew, was simulated to be critically injured. Their medical director insisted that they transport him all the way to the hospital as part of the scenario. When their armored vehicle almost rolled in training and ended up stuck, they were told to carry on and solve the problem. When they arrived at the hospital, they were told they had not made it in time and that their teammate had died.

This was certainly a rough training day and perhaps even ruffled a few feathers along the way, but by forcing the team outside of their "normal" training box and

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What ultimately saved the team members that day was the result of thorough preparation and dedicated training efforts.

creating adversity, it also forced them to overcome unexpected challenges and stay focused on their mission which is key. It also showed them that complications will arise in operations and that not every ending will be successful. It is not an understatement to say that if there is no failure in training, there will also likely not be significant growth. Failing and testing limits are also how resilience is built into the team and how collective skillsets are expanded. You will fall to the level of your training in a crisis, so train VERY HARD.

LESSONS LEARNED #3

Build a Tac-Med Program Your Life Can Depend On!

It is not an overstatement in this case to say that the team members' lives were saved by their tac-med program. When you look at the list of injuries they had and consider that they all occurred simultaneously, it is truly amazing that they all survived. But, then again, it really isn't that surprising when you look at the approach taken by the team and their agencies. This was a tactical medical program headed by a physician medical director. The team had trained all its members, as well as patrol personnel, in basic tactical medicine and hemorrhage control. They also provided advanced trained to several tactical medics equipping them with the skills to administer the clotting medications which would ultimately save Damian's life. They had prepared not only the team medics for this day, but also all of the patrol officers by training them, testing them and making sure that they had the necessary gear for a catastrophe. What this meant was that, when six team members were down (including a couple of tactical medics), everyone on scene brought skills and equipment to support the officers. This allowed the team's remaining medics to focus on the worst injuries and use the patrol officers as supporting medics to stop bleeding, install chest seals and prepare the injured officers for immediate transport. The best tac-med programs are built in multiple layers with expertise and equipment prepositioned throughout the agency. It is essential that you build a program which is both wide (i.e., throughout the agency and team) and deep (i.e., has at least a few highly experienced and skilled members). By doing so, you can utilize the broadly trained team members to deal with simpler medical issues and allow the more thoroughly trained medics to work on those who are at greatest risk.

LESSONS LEARNED #4

Utilize Stress Inoculation Training

Performance in challenging environments is a complicated thing. To achieve optimal performance, both our physical and mental capabilities need to function at their highest levels and remain focused on the task at hand despite fear, confusion and conflicting priorities. Optimal performance comes from a physically calm state and a focused mind which is gathering and sorting the most important data to create situational awareness and then making rapid decisions. When we are faced with circumstances which are complex, unfamiliar or frightening, it is easy for us to become cognitively overwhelmed and unable to perform. When overwhelmed by the stress of an event, our cognitive processing becomes fragmented and our decision-making degrades. We also become physiologically overwhelmed and filled with adrenaline; our breathing and heart rate accelerate; and we tend to miss crucial information. We can even become fixated on unimportant information or tasks and lose orientation. Much like a computer which is running out of RAM and stuck on the spinning wheel icon, when we are overwhelmed, we struggle to perform anywhere near our best.

The idea behind stress inoculation is that by preexposing individuals to the stressors they are likely to encounter operationally, we can build their capacity to handle those stressors, rapidly process information, self-regulate our physical/emotional state, and then respond accordingly to the threats presented. By utilizing stress inoculation as a systematic and progressive exposure to stressors individuals are likely to encounter in their operational environments, they will build tolerance and adaptability to that stress. Much like strength training, the idea is that gradually increasing the amount of stress someone is exposed to builds their resistance to that level of stress, making it less frightening and therefore reducing the unnecessary cognitive load to cope with it. This allows the brain to focus on higher processing skills and better decision-making, therefore allowing better performance. Simply put, the more available cognitive capacity we have, the better we can adapt to the dynamic situation, enabling us to achieve optimal performance. It is very clear that the stress inoculation GVERT had utilized paid off. The team members were all calm both under fire and after the shooting and, as a result, were able to properly triage all the conflicting priorities.

CONCLUSION

The GVERT team and the agencies involved in this event made a lot of very good decisions long before the event occurred which allowed them to perform at an exceptional level in a very challenging environment. They were prepared for a catastrophe; they had trained hard; they pushed themselves to failure in training; and they built an elite level tactical medical program for precisely this type of event. As a result, their performance on this day was exceptional which allowed them to neutralize the suspects, free the hostages and, most importantly, save the lives of all their teammates. This event in a less prepared team would have been catastrophic and likely would have cost at least two teammates their lives. Anytime an event like this occurs, we have an obligation to look at the lessons learned and utilize them to inform future training. To not do so is to waste the suffering of those who were injured or killed. P&SN

Jon Becker is the Founder/CEO of AARDVARK Tactical and the creator of Project7 Armor. He is also the host of the podcast, The Debrief with Jon Becker, now in its fifth season. Mr. Becker has almost 40 years of experience equipping and training tactical units ranging from small municipal and county law enforcement agencies to federal, military and international counterterrorism units. He can be reached at jbecker@thedebrief.live or by visiting ***thedebrief.live****.*

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Pictured above is the new compact Echelon™ 4.0C 9mm from Springfield Armory, an advanced duty-grade EDC pistol.

How to Select Your Off-Duty Handgun

There are several factors regarding an off-duty handgun which a user should consider before making a purchase.

LARRY J. NICHOLS

Selecting an everyday carry off-duty handgun can be problematic and expensive for those who are not proficient in the art of handgunning. The first consideration one must make when purchasing a firearm is to know what the primary purpose of the selected handgun is going to be. Most handguns are capable of the self-defense role, as well as hunting, plinking, target shooting, and competition.

However, a self-defense handgun is a very personal object and would not be well matched for any sport shooting role. The potential purchaser must understand what the item in question will be used for; that is, to fight for their life and the lives of their loved ones. There are several issues concerning the fighting handgun which must be considered by the user prior to its acquisition. The first mistake several people make is picking a subcompact, polymer framed pistol chambered in .380 ACP/9mm because they are easy to conceal and easygoing on the body to carry, but that is where the advantage stops. Selecting a handgun for everyday carry because it is small, lightweight and easy to conceal is, in my opinion, faulty logic. I sincerely believe some people carry a handgun as decoration and do not realize they are gambling with their lives and the lives of their loved ones based on their decision.

Concealing a handgun will never be completely comfortable, but with time and practice, it can become manageable and tolerable.

There are three questions I ask my students (law enforcement officers and legally armed citizens) before we start training and they must be totally candid with their answers. They are:

1. Why do you want to carry a handgun?
2. Are you willing to bet your life and the lives of your loved ones on the handgun you have selected?
3. Are you willing to dress to conceal the handgun?

My answers are:

1. Why do you want to carry a handgun? I carry a concealed handgun to defend myself and my loved ones with deadly force, if necessary, from violent individuals who are attacking myself or my loved one with the intent to inflict great bodily harm or death.

2. Are you willing to bet your life and the lives of your loved ones on the handgun you have selected? Yes, my advanced training in the manipulation and appropriate deployment of a firearm has given me the self-assurance necessary to defend myself and my family throughout a violent confrontation. I have chosen a quality and reliable handgun which has met and/or exceeded the essential requirements I have established for my personal fighting handgun.

3. Are you willing to dress to conceal the handgun? Yes, I have been carrying a concealed handgun for over 50 years and, during that time, I have realized that quality support equipment (holster and belt) properly worn, along with excellent training, are extremely important for quick access, deployment and security of the handgun. The art of concealing a handgun will never be comfortable, so it's vital to take the time and gain the experience so it will become tolerable. The only comfort I desire is knowing I have

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Continued from page 18

the skill, knowledge, equipment, and attitude to justifiably defend my family.

Researching the Everyday Carry Handgun

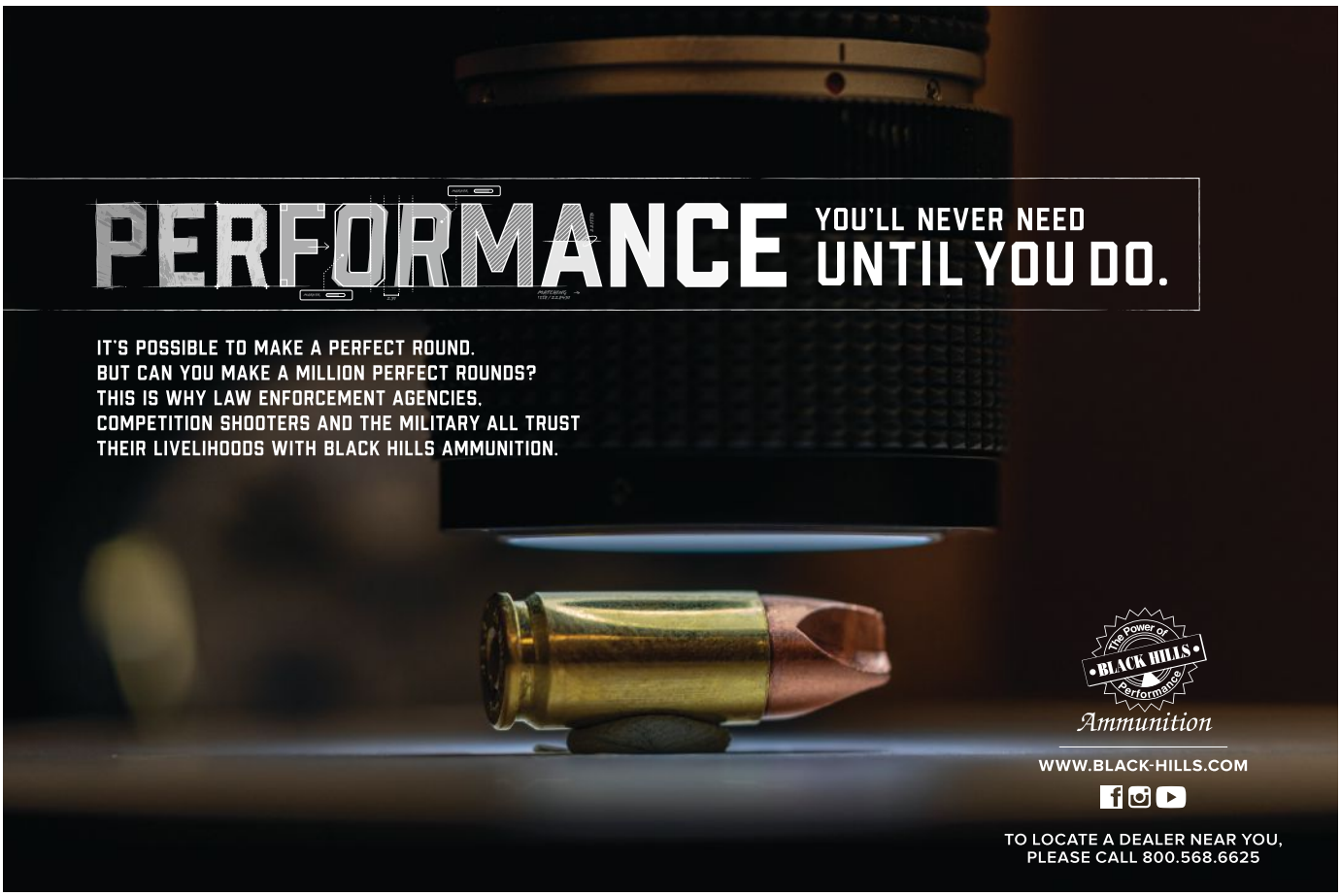
Weight – The total weight of a fully loaded fighting handgun attached to your body for eight to 12 hours per day will be felt by everyone and must be taken into consideration. Carrying a concealed handgun will never be comfortable. I have been carrying a handgun concealed for the past 50 plus years and I have discovered that a properly designed gun belt and correctly fitted KYDEX® holster worn securely around the waist can become tolerable. I personally prefer KYDEX holsters over leather because they do not stretch or absorb moisture when worn firmly against the body and, for a higher level of security, have an adjustable retention device.

Height – The distance from the bottom of the magazine to the top of the slide will affect the difficulty of concealment. The gripping surface and/or magazine well of any handgun is the problematic part to conceal. The problem of concealing a handgun on your person will depend

on the individual's dimensions and body shape.

Length/Sight Radius – The length of the slide and/or barrel is easy to conceal. The overall length of my daily carry pistol provides a six and one-quarter inch sight radius and conceals effortlessly on my six foot frame, as it would on most adult bodies. Sight radius is the distance from the rear sight to the front sight. The shorter the sight radius the more difficult it is to place accurate hits on target. The slightest error in sight alignment with a short sight radius handgun, in the hands of the general population, will result in missing the intended target. I consider the minimum sight radius for a fighting handgun to be no less than five inches. The longer sight radius will aid the defender in acquiring quick sight alignment, together with realistic combat shooting by placing decisive hits on target when subjected to elevated levels of stress.

Width – The thickness of a handgun slide or cylinder will affect the complexity of concealment. The slimmer the slide, the easier it will be to hide on your body. The smaller calibers such as .22 Long Rifle, .380 ACP and 9mm will have thinner slides. Larger calibers like .40 S&W,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10mm and .45 ACP will have a thicker slide due to the mass of the cartridges.

Recoil Pivot Distance – Draw a line from the pistol's muzzle down the center of the barrel beyond the end of the slide where the tail end of the firing pin or striker is located. When the shooting hand has a proper grip on the pistol, measure the distance from the tail end of the firing pin or striker to the top of the shooting hand – that distance is expressed as recoil pivot distance. The greater that distance is the more exaggerated the muzzle flip will be, requiring additional time to recover from recoil and reacquire the target. Time is a precious commodity when fighting for your life. The lower the pistol sits in the hand, the easier it is to control the pistol's three-directional recoil – rearwards, upwards and towards the weak side. That is a lot of movement to be occurring within the blink of an eye.

Grip Angle – Grip angle is the perpendicular line at a right angle on the slide or barrel of a handgun. Draw a horizontal line on the side of the slide or barrel from the muzzle to the end of the slide or frame, then draw a vertical line centered on the flat gripping surface (magazine well) of the frame from the bottom of the magazine well to the horizontal line on the slide. The right angle line will indicate the grip angle of the handgun. The Colt® 1911 Government model pistol has a grip angle of 18 degrees, as do most contemporary pistols manufactured today. The polymer framed pistols

manufactured by GLOCK® have a grip angle of 22.5 degrees which is my personal preference for two important reasons. First, they support shooting with a locked wrist. Because the grip angle is 22.5 degrees, I do not have to break the shooting wrist up to obtain proper sight alignment, as I must with a pistol which has an 18 degree grip angle.

Second, the grip angle on GLOCK pistols benefits unsighted fire, such as hip point and shoulder point shooting techniques. Col. Rex Applegate of World War II's OSS was a devotee of point shooting or "Instinctive Point Shooting" which is completely explained in his book, *Kill or Get Killed*. In his book, he recommends a semiautomatic pistol with a grip angle like the German Luger pistol which pointed better than other semiautomatic pistols at the time, due to the greater grip angle in relationship to the barrel. GLOCK's line of semiautomatic pistols is very close to the grip angle Col. Rex Applegate desired. Neither grip angle is inherently better than the other; it simply depends on an individual's hand and wrist anatomy. Some people naturally find one angle more comfortable and intuitive than the other. This is why many have a strong preference for a specific type or brand of pistol – it feels more natural to them. When someone says, "That pistol doesn't point well," it's likely true for them due to their unique anatomy.

Personal preference plays a significant role in performance. If a person feels comfortable and confident with a pistol, he (or she) is more likely to perform well with it. While anyone can learn to operate either grip angle, all else being equal, it's easier to develop proficiency – especially under stress – when using a pistol with a grip angle which aligns with their natural anatomy.

Capacity – Magazine and/or cylinder capacity and caliber are still a subject of lengthy debate and they all have a valid point. What I would choose for myself will not work for everyone. So, as for caliber, I recommend my students to carry the same exact cartridge as their local police or county sheriff issues to their officers or deputies. The reason for that is it is one less item you will have to justify if involved in a court case after a shooting. As for capacity, the rounds you carry on your body will also increase the total weight of the handgun. So, there must be a remedy to the question, how much is too much and how much is too little? My life experiences have taught me to carry a pistol which holds at least ten rounds in the magazine and an additional ten round magazine as an emergency reload. When I carried a revolver as a deputy sheriff, it had a six-shot cylinder and I also carried an additional six rounds in a speed strip to reload with, if it became necessary. The choice is yours – just remember why, and for whom, you are carrying a concealed handgun.

My personal everyday carry (and I do mean everyday carry) pistol is fully loaded and has a four inch barrel, a six and one quarter inch sight radius, a half inch recoil-pivot distance, a 22.5 grip angle, and a single stack magazine charged with ten cartridges. I carry it on my dominant side in a KYDEX outside the waistband, zero cant hip holster. My emergency reload magazine is charged with ten rounds of 9mm ammunition giving me 21 rounds, if I should need them. I carry my reload magazine on my support side in an outside the waistband KYDEX magazine pouch. My defensive ammunition is the same as my local county sheriff issues to his deputies, one less item I will have to justify if I should end up in court after a shooting. I also carry a small backup handgun, a three inch folding blade pocketknife, a small flashlight, and my cell phone. All of the aforementioned gear is supported and firmly attached to my body with a Nexbelt gun belt. I sincerely hope and pray I never again have to use any of that equipment on another person. **P&SN**

Larry J. Nichols retired in 2011 after 27 years of honorable service as the Senior Rangemaster/Armorer for the Burbank (CA) Police Department. He served five years with the Orange County (CA) Sheriff's Department as their Firearms Instructor/Armorer before moving to Burbank, California.

Larry has over 40 years of experience as a professional firearms instructor, with over 31 years as a law enforcement lethal, less lethal and less than lethal force instructor. He is internationally noted for his innovative and pioneering work in the planning, development and implementation of realistic law enforcement firearms training programs. He enjoys receiving feedback from his readers and he can be contacted at gunnyretired@gmail.com.

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Are You Considering Law School after Pulling the Pin?

Some law enforcement professionals consider attending law school during their "tour of duty." Exploring the reasons and options can help decide if pursuing law is the right path.

STEPHENIE SLAHOR, PH.D., J.D.

The Presley Center of Crime and Justice Studies of the University of California, Riverside, previously hosted a presentation about attending law school. Members of the Riverside County Bar Association cohosted the presentation to assist with the considerations to make when deciding whether to gain a law degree.

Panel member Erica Alfaro, Esq., advised that some law schools allow potential school applicants to sit in class for a day to see how law instruction is done and how faculty/student interaction occurs. "Can you see yourself doing this?" is a question which might be more easily answered after experiencing such classes and visiting law schools, she stated. If you are considering a particular law school, she advises contacting the registrar to answer your questions or doubts and to arrange a visit.

Before attending a law school, you will likely have to score well on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), a standardized test administered at different times of the year. It assesses the basic skills needed for success in law school and as a lawyer, including reading comprehension, decision-making, language proficiency, analytical skills, and logical thinking. A preparation course is a wise choice, said Alfaro, because it enhances the chance for a better score through practicing sample questions. Time (and money) will be needed for such preparatory courses, though, and those may be factors which are limited. Also, the LSAT may have to be taken more than once in order to perform better on the scoring, but there are limits on the number of times the LSAT may be taken in a given year. In addition, schools may have different policies about whether the best score or an average score is used to evaluate a potential student.

Advanced Preparedness

Free or low cost online resources, used practice books and setting a personal timeline schedule for budgeting time and money may help the practical side of preparation for the LSAT. Alfaro adds that it is wise to determine the cutoff scores needed for the schools being considered for enrollment. Some schools are what Alfaro termed "dream schools," but they may be out of reach because of poor LSAT scores, long waiting lists for enrollment, high tuition costs, distance from home or costs to move to the campus, or other factors. It may be necessary to find other schools or ones which do not require the LSAT for entry, but, rather, look at overall grade point average, work experience, meaningful letters of recommendation from respected sources, and other factors.

Pulling the pin offers the freedom to explore interests which may have been sidelined during a law enforcement career.

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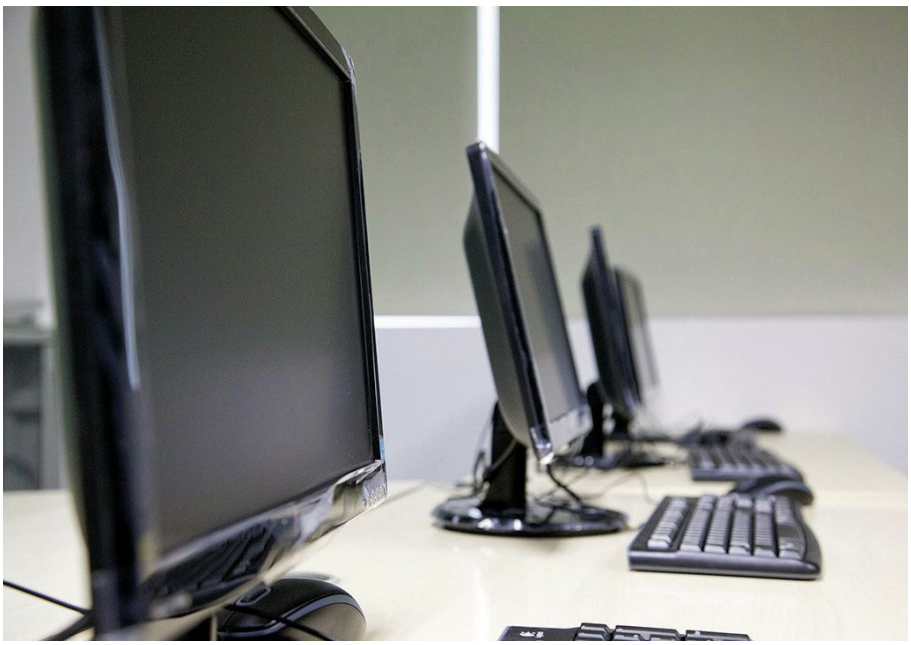

Before enrolling in law school, you will likely need to achieve a strong score on the Law School Admission Test.

She also advises obtaining practical experience, working with a lawyer or legal aid/public interest group to gain practice in research, client relations, trial preparation, and day-to-day active legal work. Such full- or part-time work or volunteering will enhance the skills and learning related to law and its processes. And, it may also reveal that a law school education and/or a law career are not to one's liking.

"There is no single path to the law," said panel member David Rivera, Esq. Any undergraduate curriculum in any field of learning can be the basis for learning analysis, writing, English grammar skills, and reading comprehension – all things which will be tested with the LSAT and which will be needed for success in law school. Cultivate relations with your professors for meaningful letters of recommendation from them and have your employers describe your work ethic, self-discipline and goal orientation. If your GPA is low, but you are working, focus on your strengths at work, your challenges and experiences, and why you want to attend law school, Rivera said. Find what you have which stands out to distinguish you from the other applicants. Bringing something different to the law school environment and classes tells the school you can be successful not only in the school itself, but also competent as a lawyer. Be sure your letters of recommendation address your character and your classwork, not just one or the other. He acknowledged that future career prospects will likely be better if you attend a better school, but there are unaccredited schools which may meet your goal of graduating law school and taking the bar examination in the state in which you want to practice. The school and exam processes demand time and money, but even more a factor is that you must be what he termed "incredibly disciplined" to achieve the goal of completing law school, taking bar examination preparation courses and passing the bar examination.

Alternate Routes to Employment

Marie Wood, Esq., also a panel member, stated her career in law began as a paralegal assistant to a lawyer. That practical experience in legal processes, terminology and, yes, paperwork created her "depository of information," she said, which assisted her success in achieving the LSAT and being admitted to law school. She, too, emphasized the importance of strong letters of recommendation from professors, employers and/or lawyers. Such letters must be from personal knowledge, attesting to your dedication and your work ethic. It is "quality over quantity" when it comes to those letters, she said. She also advises developing a good support system from family, friends, former teachers, and lawyers. "It's doable. You must have a plan to do it," she says. If your goal is a prestige job at a major law firm, you will be in heavy competition not only for such a job, but also from those who attended a major, top-tier law school, she said. For the majority of lawyers, though, in the public or private sector, that top-tier school may not be so important. "Schools want students who will succeed and who will make the school look good," she said, so "share who you are, what makes you 'you' and what makes you unique." You must state "this is why you want me" in your application so that you "stand out from the other applicants," she said.

Passing the Bar: What Next?

Yes, there is light at the end of that tunnel and passing the bar is the beginning of the next step – deciding where you will focus your law career. Will it be criminal law, civil law or a blend of both? That "next" is definitely not what TV and the movies depict as the practice of law.

Darrel Exum of Exum Law Offices said, "You have to decide early on that you love this," or else you will burn out. The practice of law involves clients who are "besieged with human drama" involving a victim's justice or a defendant's freedom in criminal law, or money, property and frustration which are involved in civil law. "Part of being a lawyer is being a social worker," he said, and that translates to work which sometimes underpromises and overdelivers. The pressure of keeping current with the changes of law and carrying out the work of a lawyer cannot be 24/7. There must be a balance between work and a life with family, friends and other interests.

Homan Hosseinioun of the Riverside County (CA) District Attorney's Office agreed that things done on a daily or weekly basis in practicing law are not all that is needed. A competent lawyer knows how to read people and use all of life's experiences to prepare being an advocate for the people behind the cases.

Lori Meyers of The Law Offices of Lori Myers said that, unlike a medical degree in which a graduate must then work an internship or residency with other physicians, lawyers become admitted to the bar and then are able to practice at local, state and federal levels. She advised seeking experienced mentor lawyers to learn which areas of law are more appealing and how one's "personal development" will influence the choice. She said new lawyers

sometimes find that some cases are not appealing or have ugly evidence and things not thought of – all because of the drama and problems people have when involved in criminal or civil law matters. Those people look to lawyers to "make it better," she said, but that takes a balanced person who not only knows the law, but also knows how to manage the stress and demands of practicing law. Dreams need to be "realistic," she said. Cases and their outcomes will change someone's life forever. "You're an advocate for your client," she said. Besides knowing the law and its processes, you also need to know how to handle personality conflicts, self-control and how to speak persuasively without anger or lost temperament. Those skills are needed in both criminal law and civil law.

Where Should I Work?

Judge Rany Stamen of the Riverside County Superior Court said that, after the "huge task" of passing the bar, the new lawyer must consider whether to work for a public agency, a large law firm, a small practice, or one's own practice. Economics may dictate such a decision. Working for the government will provide a steady income and benefits and access to a well equipped library and software, but government work may not fulfill one's "passion" about the law. In a large firm, the new attorney is often assigned to very routine, entry-level work such as doing depositions or document preparation. Even then, a large firm wants "rainmakers" aboard who will bring business to the law firm and increase the billable hours. A smaller firm may offer more variety in work for the new lawyer and perhaps even the opportunity to take a case from the first client interview through to the conclusion of a trial.

Having one's own practice is a leap of faith and requires not only the abilities of a lawyer, but also a person who can run the business of the law firm, hiring of competent staff and the economic reality that growth may be extremely slow for the first couple of years. Also, research and practice resources may cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars per month, along with rent, salaries for full- or part-time staff, etc.

Lori Myers added that, for female lawyers, the questions of balancing family and work can be challenging. Employers expect availability for work, but a woman (particularly a single mother) may find that she is relegated to non-trial work and other assignments. "She won't be in the trenches," she said, adding that stereotypes still exist and management sometimes makes decisions based on such concepts.

All the panelists agreed that, whether criminal or civil practice, there must be a personal "outlet" to help the lawyer develop time with family, friends and interests. Otherwise, the lawyer will become too methodical and clients may lose confidence and the sense that their lawyer cares about them. Changing law firms or areas of practice can help someone struggling with priorities. Said Judge Stamen, "Don't be old someday and saying, 'I didn't pursue my passion.'" Practicing law is "a difficult thing to do year after year," he said, but you must "pursue your passion" and work toward a "good balance."

Goals, discipline and tenacity are the keys to your success. P&SN

Stephenie Slahor, Ph.D., J.D., is a writer in the fields of law enforcement and security. She can be reached at drss12@msn.com.

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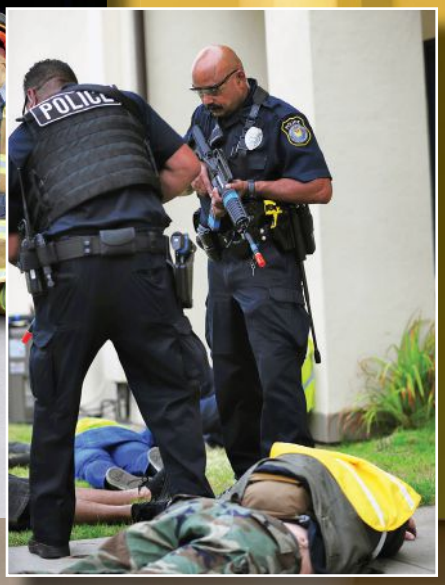

TRAINING FOR ACTIVE SHOOTER SCENARIOS: Best Practices and Training

EUGENE NIELSEN

In recent years, the frequency and severity of active shooter incidents have underscored the critical need for comprehensive training programs for law enforcement personnel. It is imperative for officers to be well prepared – both mentally and physically – to handle such high stress situations.

An active shooter is defined as an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area. These situations are unpredictable and evolve rapidly, often concluding within minutes before law enforcement can arrive on the scene. Effective training can significantly enhance the ability of officers to respond swiftly and efficiently, potentially saving countless lives.

Responding to an active shooter incident requires law enforcement officers to act decisively to neutralize the threat. The basics of active shooter response include quickly assessing the situation upon arrival, establishing a command post and coordinating with other responding agencies.

Officers must prioritize locating and engaging the shooter to prevent further harm, while also ensuring the safety of civilians by directing them to evacuate or find secure hiding places. Effective communication is crucial – both among officers and with other emergency responders – to ensure a coordinated and efficient response. Additionally, officers must remain vigilant and adaptable, ready to adjust their tactics as the situation evolves. By adhering to these fundamental principles, law enforcement can effectively manage active shooter incidents and minimize casualties.

Best Practices for Active Shooter Training

Scenario-based training is a cornerstone of effective preparation for active shooter incidents. This method involves creating realistic simulations which replicate the chaos, stress and unpredictability of an actual active shooter event.

Training environments are meticulous-

Scenario-based training is key to preparing for active shooter incidents, using realistic simulations to replicate the chaos and stress of such events.

ly designed to closely mimic real-world settings such as schools, offices, shopping malls, and public spaces. This helps officers become familiar with the types of locations they may encounter during an actual incident.

Props, such as furniture, vehicles and other objects, are used to create realistic obstacles and scenarios. Role players, including volunteers or actors, simulate victims, bystanders and suspects to enhance the authenticity of the training.

By exposing officers to high stress scenarios in a controlled setting, they can develop the ability to remain calm and make sound decisions under pressure. This process, known as stress inoculation, helps officers build resilience and improve their performance in real-life situations.

Conduct of Training

Training scenarios start with basic situations and gradually increase in complexity and intensity. This allows officers to build confidence and competence as they progress through the training.

The development of tactical skills is crucial for officers responding to active shooter incidents. One essential skill is room clearing, when officers systematically search and secure rooms to locate and neutralize threats. This process involves using cover and concealment, effectively communicating with team members and maintaining situational awareness to ensure safety and efficiency.

Another vital skill is breaching techniques which officers practice to gain entry into locked or barricaded areas. This may involve the use of specialized tools such as battering rams, pry bars or hydraulic breaching equipment, depending on the situation's requirements and the level of training.

Lastly, officers practice engaging the shooter with the intent to neutralize the threat. This includes honing their marksmanship skills, accurately identifying targets and making critical decisions under pressure. These tactical skills collectively prepare officers to handle high stress situations and protect lives effectively.

Before beginning any training exercise, it's crucial to conduct a safety sweep to ensure the environment is free from any unsafe conditions or circumstances. A safety brief follows, reminding all attendees of the safety rules and emphasizing that they are as responsible for their own safety as those conducting the training. The lead trainer then provides an evolutionary brief, explaining how the training will progress.

A critical step in maintaining safety is the triple check. Trainees, trainers, observers, and role players must check

Continued from page 29

Officers train to neutralize threats by sharpening marksmanship, identifying targets and making critical decisions under pressure, equipping them to manage high stress situations.

themselves to ensure they have no live weapons or ammunition. This is followed by a partner check and then another check by a trainer. This procedure is repeated for anyone entering or reentering the training area, including visitors.

Role players are given specific guidelines to follow to ensure the training objectives are met and to maintain a safe environment. An equipment check is conducted to ensure no live weapons are used and that all safety equipment is functional.

For Force-on-Force (FOF) training with Simunition®-type marking cartridges, the minimum safety equipment includes a full face helmet, throat protection and groin protection for both men and women. Additional full body protection is recommended for role players who will be taking multiple hits.

If force-on-force weapons are used, it's imperative to check the weapons to ensure the magazines are loaded with the correct rounds and that no live rounds or more damaging rounds are mixed in. An experienced trainer should issue the equipment and oversee the proper charging of any force-on-force weapons.

The first safety loop involves checking all safety equipment on participants to ensure it is properly in place and doc-

When using force-on-force weapons, ensure magazines contain only the correct rounds, with no live or harmful rounds mixed in. An experienced trainer should oversee equipment distribution and weapon preparation.

umenting any preexisting injuries. Before starting the training scenario or isolation exercise, a second safety loop is conducted. The training safety officer is asked if it is safe to begin and the officer in charge asks the trainees if they feel safe to continue. Trainees should speak up if they see any unsafe conditions.

The training officer in charge then calls out, "The range is hot" and "Begin scenario/exercise." Anyone can stop the scenario if someone is injured or at risk of injury by shouting, "Stop!" or "Red!" When appropriate, the training officer calls out, "End scenario/exercise."

After each scenario or isolation exercise, participants are asked if there are any injuries, indicated by a thumbs-up if there are none. Finally, a debriefing session is held where the officer in charge, student officers and role players discuss the scenario to enhance the learning experience. Questions such as "Why did you do what you did?" and "How do you see yourself acting the next time this same thing happens?" help draw out learning points from the students.

Joint training with law enforcement, EMS, fire departments, and federal agencies builds clear communication and protocols for efficient coordination during real incidents.

These after-action reviews provide an opportunity for officers to reflect on their performance, receive feedback from instructors and learn from their experiences. Debriefing sessions emphasize the importance of learning from mistakes and continuously improving. Officers are encouraged to share their perspectives and insights, fostering a culture of continuous learning and development.

By incorporating these key aspects into scenario-based training, law enforcement agencies can better prepare their officers to respond effectively. This comprehensive approach ensures that officers develop the necessary skills, resilience and confidence to handle high stress situations and protect the communities they serve.

Interagency Coordination

Interagency coordination is crucial for an effective response to active shooter incidents, as it often requires seamless collaboration between multiple agencies. Regular joint training exercises

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SECURING CAMPUS LIFE:
Strategies for Effective Access Control in Higher Education

Raffaele Ceravolo, Regional Sales Manager, Traka Americas

Often operating as complex, self-sufficient ecosystems, colleges and universities represent unique security challenges for campus law enforcement. With dozens of buildings spread out across thousands of acres, combined with a diverse mix of students, staff, faculty, and visitors, it's paramount for security officials to have comprehensive measures in place to ensure safe working, learning and living spaces.

There are many solutions to consider when pursuing that standard. Still, law enforcement should start with arguably the most fundamental threat and let that serve as the foundation for implementing additional measures. Access and asset control impact every person on a college or university campus, and many schools use some version of badge or key card access for exterior entry. In the more advanced settings, staff, faculty and contractors use those credentials to access critical keys and assets in intelligent cabinets and lockers connected to the school's general access control system.

The benefits of this integration are extensive. Faculty and staff don't have to worry about a different badge, key or password to access the storage solution. Administrators can remotely designate who can access which cabinet, locker or asset. They can then be notified when something isn't returned on time. When a badge holder leaves or is terminated, their access can be deactivated immediately, both to the buildings and to the internal storage solutions.

The same technology can be utilized by campus law enforcement who often need to access those same buildings and their own highly secured facility. Badge access can be integrated to help with internal operations, like key cabinets which store fleet vehicle keys. Those cabinets give administrators an idea of which cruiser was taken out and when. When that vehicle is returned to the station, the officer can note if there's something wrong with it (flat tire, needs an oil change, etc.) which can restrict that vehicle from being checked out until the fault has been corrected. This can help extend the life of vehicles and reduce the number of officers trying to check out the "favorite" one.

That concept applies to shared devices like radios, tablets, laptops, and firearms. Intelligent lockers can safely house sidearms and long guns, and weapons can be RFID tagged to help track their usage further. Like non-law enforcement personnel, access to these heavily used items can be deactivated instantly if the storage solutions are integrated into the central access control network.

When solutions communicate with each other, it streamlines operations and helps safeguard against unauthorized access and behavior. Ultimately, these intelligent key and asset storage solutions and their respective integration within a school's access control footprint represent foundational keystones in building a solidified security environment, both for campus officers and those they pledge to protect.

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involving local law enforcement, emergency medical services, fire departments, and federal agencies are essential. These exercises help establish clear communication channels and protocols, ensuring that all parties can work together efficiently during an actual incident.

Developing a unified command structure is another key element. This structure ensures that all responding agencies have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which helps prevent confusion and enhances the overall efficiency of the response. Establishing standardized communication protocols is also vital, as it helps prevent misunderstandings and ensures that critical information is shared promptly among all involved parties.

Resource sharing is another important aspect of interagency coordination. Agencies collaborate to share specialized equipment and personnel which enhances their overall response capabilities. By pooling resources, agencies can ensure that they have the necessary tools and expertise to handle active shooter incidents effectively. This collaborative approach not only improves the immediate response, but also fosters a culture of cooperation and mutual support among different agencies.

Behavioral Analysis and Threat Assessment

Understanding the behavioral patterns and characteristics of potential active shooters is critical for prevention and early intervention. Training programs can teach officers to recognize preincident indicators, such as changes in behavior, social isolation and expressions of violence or anger. By identifying these warning signs early, officers may be able to take proactive measures to prevent potential threats from escalating.

Many agencies establish threat assessment teams which include law enforcement, mental health professionals and educators. These multidisciplinary teams evaluate potential threats and develop intervention strategies tailored to each situation. By leveraging the expertise of various professionals, these teams can create comprehensive plans to address and mitigate risks effectively.

Behavioral profiling is another critical component of threat assessment. Officers learn to identify common traits and behaviors associated with active shooters which helps in assessing the likelihood of an individual posing a threat. This knowledge enables officers to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions to prevent incidents.

Community engagement plays a vital role in early intervention. Building strong relationships with community members encourages the reporting of suspicious behavior, enabling law enforcement to intervene before a situation escalates. By fostering trust and open communication, officers can work collaboratively with the community to enhance overall safety and security.

By incorporating these key components into their training programs, law enforcement agencies can better prepare officers to identify and address potential threats, ultimately

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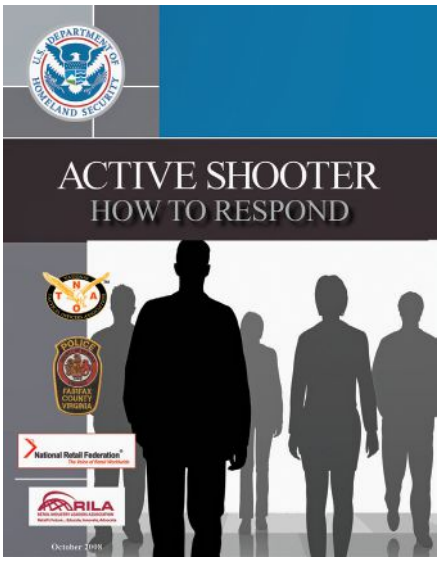


The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) provides downloadable resources and training materials, such as the "Active Shooter – How to Respond" booklet.

preventing active shooter incidents and protecting the community.

Mental Health and Resilience Training

The psychological impact of responding to active shooter incidents can be profound, making mental health and resilience training an essential component of law enforcement training programs. Incorporating these elements helps officers manage stress and maintain their well-being, both during and after such high stress events.

One key aspect of this training is teaching stress management techniques. Officers learn methods such as deep breathing, mindfulness, and visualization to help them manage stress effectively. These techniques can be used during an incident to maintain focus and calm, as well as afterward to aid in recovery.

Peer support programs are another crucial element. These programs allow officers to share their experiences and provide mutual support which can significantly reduce feelings of isolation. By fostering a sense of camaraderie and understanding, peer support programs help officers cope with the emotional aftermath of traumatic events.

Access to mental health resources is also vital. Providing officers with access to mental health professionals and counseling services ensures that they can seek help when needed. This support can be critical in addressing any psychological issues which arise from their experiences and promoting long-term mental health.

Resilience building is another important focus of these training programs. By promoting physical fitness, healthy lifestyle choices and positive coping strategies, officers can build resilience to better handle the demands of their job. This holistic approach to well-being helps officers maintain their mental and physical health, enabling them to perform their duties effectively and sustainably.

By incorporating these key aspects into their training programs, law enforcement agencies can better support their officers' mental health and resilience, ultimately enhancing their ability to respond to active shooter incidents and other high stress situations.

Resources

The FBI's ASAPP training is a two hour course which combines lessons learned from years of research and employs scenario-based exercises to help participants practice the decision-making process of the Run, Hide, Fight principles. This training is designed to enhance the preparedness of individuals and organizations in responding to active shooter incidents by providing practical, hands-on experience in a controlled environment. Additional information may be obtained from the FBI's resource website at **https://tinyurl.com/bdacfcs6**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) offers comprehensive resources and training materials, including the *Active Shooter – How to Respond* booklet. This booklet provides detailed guidelines on how to prepare for, and respond to, active shooter situations, covering essential topics such as recognizing potential threats, developing emergency action plans and implementing effective response strategies. A copy of this booklet can be downloaded at the following URL: **https://tinyurl.com/yaazwpdw**

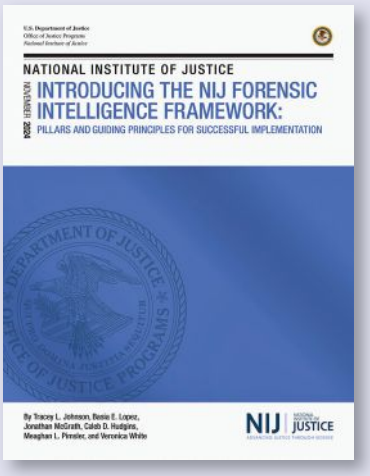
The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) provides a range of courses, materials and workshops focused on active shooter preparedness. These programs cover preincident indicators, potential attack methods and the development of emergency action plans. By participating in CISA's training programs, individuals and organizations can enhance their ability to identify and mitigate potential threats before they escalate. Visit the following URL for additional information: **https://tinyurl.com/44xe5fwf**

Final Thoughts

Training for active shooter scenarios is an essential component of modern law enforcement. By adopting best practices and participating in comprehensive training programs, officers can enhance their preparedness and effectiveness in responding to these critical incidents. Through continuous education and interagency collaboration, law enforcement can better protect communities and save lives in the face of active shooter threats. P&SN

Eugene Nielsen is the owner and operator of a firm which provides private intelligence, security consulting and training services. He has a background in law enforcement and a BA degree from the University of California. He has written over 1,500 articles which have been published in various national and international journals and magazines. He was a member of SWAT Magazine*'s contributing staff for more than 20 years.*

NEWS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INTRODUCING THE NIJ FORENSIC INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK:
PILLARS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION
NIJ

Introducing the NIJ Forensic Intelligence Framework

Forensic data often remains archived in state and local labs which is only used to solve and prosecute individual crimes. Using a forensic intelligence approach instead, agencies can use datasets to link and track crime patterns, helping to solve, disrupt and prevent crime.

The NIJ Forensic Intelligence Framework provides guidance for state and local law enforcement agencies and their forensic laboratories to develop or enhance a forensic intelligence program.

The benefits of forensic intelligence practices include:

- Early identification and elimination of suspects and recognition of criminal tactics, techniques and procedures.
- Increased public safety through the detection, disruption, prevention, and deterrence of serial and organized crime.
- Improved policing and security actions through enhanced threat and risk assessments and identification of emerging issues of concern to the community.

A PDF of the guide can be downloaded at **https://tinyurl.com/ybtuhuzz**

12 Tenets of Training

One necessary component of planning and preparation for an active assailant and mass violence incident is giving personnel the necessary skills and equipment to manage their roles and responsibilities effectively – skills in areas such as incident command, leadership and active assailant response. The 12 Tenets of Training checklist is meant to provide leaders and training personnel with key considerations to help select training which has been vetted; has proven to be effective; and is taught by qualified, certified, and continually evaluated instructors. This checklist is one of the tools which the COPS Office has developed to assist agencies in implementing the recommendations of the Critical Incident Review: Active Shooter at Robb Elementary School report.

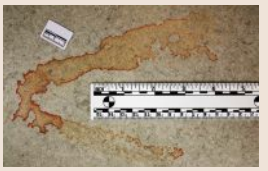
To download the checklist, visit **https://tinyurl.com/yk8z47dw**

Bloodstain Pattern Analysis

Bloodstain pattern analysis is a forensic science discipline which reconstructs a blood shedding event and can provide crucial evidence in some legal cases.

Several reports have questioned the validity of bloodstain pattern analysis, including a 2009 National Research Council report and one in 2016 by the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. These reports called for more objective methods in forensic science and a better understanding of the error rates of current practices.

In response, the NIJ funded error rate studies of practicing bloodstain pattern analysts and experimental and computational fluid dynamics research. Results from these studies allow practitioners in the justice system to consider the value and the limits of analysts' testimony.



To access the resources concerning these studies, visit **https://tinyurl.com/4ynumtx7**

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POLICE SNIPER UTILIZATION SURVEYS AVAILABLE

What is the average distance of a police sniper shooting in the United States?

DERRICK D. BARTLETT *President, American Sniper Association*

The generic answer to that question (for at least the last 30 years) has been "around 70 yards." It has been stated as fact in sniper schools, articles, books, and conversations around the country. When pressed for a source of this information, most people have credited "the FBI's statistics."

When the American Sniper Association (ASA) was formed in 2000, one of the first orders of business was obtaining a copy of those statistics to see how current they were and to perhaps do our part to update them. We were somewhat amazed to discover that the FBI didn't collect information or statistics specific to police sniper shootings. The report so many snipers, instructors and authors had been quoting and relying on was, in fact, a myth.

Realizing this information had never been collected, ASA seized upon this as an opportunity to impact the sniper community in a beneficial and positive way. We initiated a project to gather statistical data about police snipers' use of force engagements. A survey form was developed which asked the questions which were of most interest and importance to sniper teams and administrators. We established the parameters of our survey field regarding the agencies to be involved; time span to be covered; and the types of engagements which would qualify as "sniper" shootings. Then, using the labor of a group of dedicated volunteers, the work began.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND CRITERION

The US Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics was asked to provide a current listing of agencies from around the country which maintain a SWAT team. The DOJ's annual report, "Law Enforcement Management Statistics, Data of Individual State and Local Agencies," provided an alphabetized listing of 897 agencies to contact.

To call and/or write each SWAT team, we also needed a listing of each agency with general information about them. The National Public Safety Information Bureau annually publishes the "National Directory of Law Enforcement Administrators" which provides a complete listing of local, county, state, and federal agencies from around the United States.

Agencies outside of our initial contact schedule were made aware of the survey process through presentations made by ASA personnel at tactical conferences, sniper schools, seminars, and competitions nationwide. After advising them of the survey and explaining our goals and objectives, interested attendees were given survey forms to complete. Notifications were also made on our website and in *SNIPER*, the Snipercraft quarterly newsletter.

Articles explaining the survey process and its goals and objectives were published in several major tactical and law enforcement magazines. As a result of reading the articles, agencies contacted ASA to request forms. By monitoring national news and wire services, we were made aware of sniper-related incidents occurring around the country during the survey periods. In these cases, we followed up by directly contacting the involved agencies to obtain information.

The result of this dissemination process was that, although our initial contact pool was limited to agencies known to have SWAT teams, many agencies beyond the scope of that group voluntarily participated in the survey after direct contacts with ASA personnel. This, in turn, has led to a more comprehensive and complete survey of tactical teams around the country by reaching additional teams which would not have been included.

After the data collection phase of this project was completed, time was invested in verification of the information gathered. Many of the agencies contacted in the initial phase were contacted again to clarify vague or conflicting information. Hundreds of additional man-hours were spent searching newspaper archives in attempts to find story details about most of the documented incidents.

This project was ambitious at the outset and proved arduous in the execution, but we were proud to finally produce the *Police Sniper Utilization Report.* This report was a significant accomplishment and is

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POLICE SNIPER UTILIZATION SURVEYS AVAILABLE

Continued from page 36

It's no surprise that the .308 has been the most commonly used caliber by law enforcement snipers.

unprecedented in its scope. A comprehensive study of the use and effectiveness of police snipers in the United States now exists.

The finished product is not a dry recitation of numbers and boring bar graphs. Instead, it compiles data and relevant anecdotal information which will prove useful in understanding how snipers have been employed over the past three decades. Beyond knowing the average distance of police sniper shootings, readers will find additional important operational information; for instance, the longest and shortest distances encountered. The breakdown shows how many have occurred in daylight, as opposed to low light. Readers will also learn how often shots have passed through intermediate barriers, as well as how many have passed through their intended target. Many more operational circumstances were recorded and quantified, as well. The data in this report gives administrators, snipers and team leaders a clearer picture of real-world sniper operations. It has also helped dispel several misconceptions about snipers. Our goal is to assist SWAT team leadership in structuring training, buying equipment and planning deployments.

HIGHLIGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Only shots which were the result of "a deliberate long rifle shot, by a person assigned to the sniper position, against a designated human target" were recorded as a sniper shot. This excluded shots by patrol, entry or perimeter officers, or shots taken with handguns or submachine guns. It also excludes shots on animals, cars or other objects. We did receive report forms detailing shootings in these categories.

- To date, we have collected reports of over 500 police sniper shootings, occurring between 1984 and 2022.
- Not surprisingly, the .308 has been the most common caliber used by snipers. Others employed have included .223, 30-06, 300WM, and .338.
- Contrary to common beliefs, less than half of the persons shot were struck in the head. Most suspects were hit in the body or their extremities.
- Much of traditional sniper training has been limited to prone, bipod and 100 yard shooting drills. A fact verified by the report is that sniper shootings are likely to be done from a variety of distances and seldom from a prone bipod position. In fact, documentation shows nearly half of the snipers have had to utilize standing, sitting, kneeling, squatting, and improvised positions. Hopefully, this knowledge will inspire teams to incorporate position shooting into their training programs in the future. It certainly removes the most common excuses to

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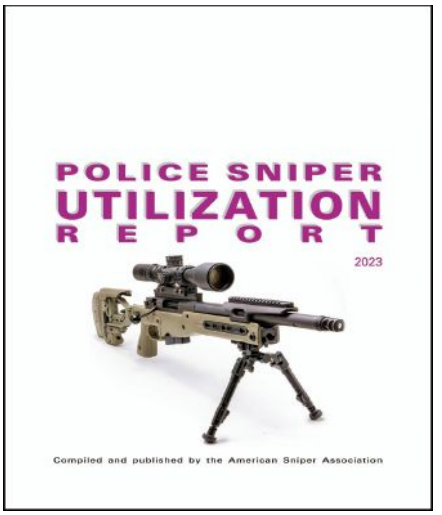
Continued from page 38

avoid doing so.

- Nearly 98% of the recorded police sniper shootings have taken place at distances inside of 200 yards. This is contrary to the belief of some that snipers in rural areas are deploying and shooting at long ranges.
- Night vision equipment has played only a limited role in actual shootings to date. However, there is a demonstrated need for teams to purchase and train with night vision. Nearly 45% of the shootings documented occurred during low light hours.
- Dozens of instances have been documented when two or more snipers fired simultaneous shots at a single suspect. However, none of the reports received recorded sniper engagements on multiple suspects.

THE REAL-WORLD SNIPER

There is nothing contained in this report which could be viewed as critical of law enforcement agencies. Since no agencies or persons are identified in the report, it does not expose any participating agency to future litigation. Therefore, there is no concern of it inevitably making its way into the hands of attorneys. However, the report carries with it an implied warning for every agency reading it. We have clearly documented what snipers are facing in real-world operations. Learning what snipers are actually doing should become the framework for purchasing equipment and designing training programs to prepare your team for the realities of the job. This report can help quantify the standards all teams will be expected to meet and every law enforcement sniper should read these reports.



Over 500 police sniper shootings have been documented which took place between 1984 and 2022.

A LIVING DOCUMENT

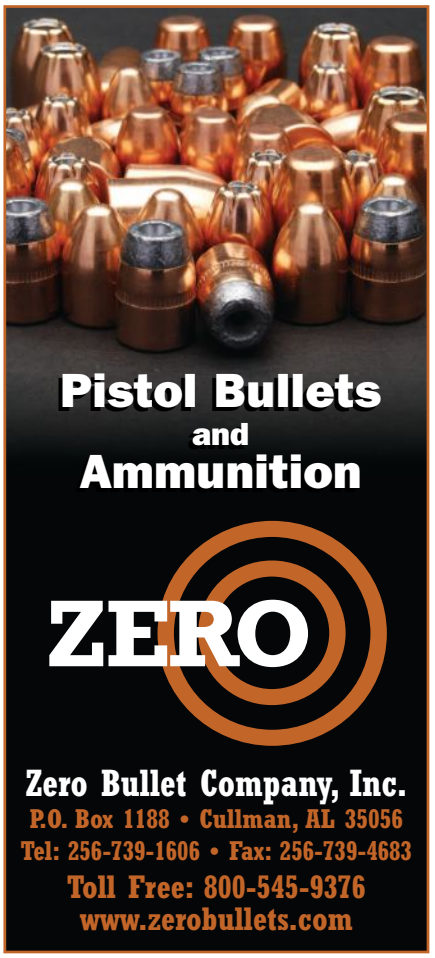
The Police Sniper Utilization database is the only one of its kind anywhere in the tactical world. The survey's reports represent a constantly evolving work in progress. As soon as collecting available data for specific timeframes has ended, additional incidents will be discovered, as they have gone unreported in our prior collection attempts. We continue to hope agencies which initially balked at participating will be convinced of the legitimacy of the project after reading the series of reports.

Nothing contained in it is meant to critique or second-guess the actions of any of the snipers or agencies represented in this document and it is not presented that way. It is important that the tactical community does not shy away from taking a critical look at its history and pay attention to the lessons waiting to be learned. Where applicable, we have identified learning points found in specific incidents. In most cases, the responsible sniper team provides them. Others are drawn from objective analysis of the facts of the incident. The report narrative also contains training recommendations based on those lessons learned.

Although the latest report is completed, the process is not. We encourage agencies to help us maintain current data by reporting any sniper-involved shootings to the ASA, as soon as it is practical. We understand the issues raised by ongoing investigations and pending litigation. Our need is for statistical information. The information requested on the survey form is basic, nonjudgmental details contained in an incident report. We don't solicit investigative information which could be subpoenaed or otherwise used in a civil case. The individual officer or agency involved is not part of the database and neither is identified in the final report. All data and information collected will be considered sensitive and will not be distributed to the public.

A Sniper Utilization Survey Form can be found on the American Sniper Association's website at **americansniper.org**. If you have any questions or would like information on how to receive a copy of the report, please contact ASA at info@americansniper.org, or by calling 863-385-7835. Limited copies of the 2017, 2019 and 2021 Editions are still available. Ordering information is available on the website at **americansniper.org**.

Derrick Bartlett is a 28 year veteran of law enforcement. He retired from the Fort Lauderdale (FL) Police Department where he served as a SWAT sniper. Twenty-two years in special operations have provided him with opportunities to train with several elite units and renowned instructors. Derrick is a founding member and the current president of the American Sniper Association. As the managing director of Snipercraft, Inc., he has provided instruction for snipers and supervisors for hundreds of police agencies throughout the United States. He is a committee member of the NTOA Sniper Section and has authored the books, Snipercraft: The Art of the Police Sniper, Staring at the Crosshairs and Riding the Recoil. P&SN



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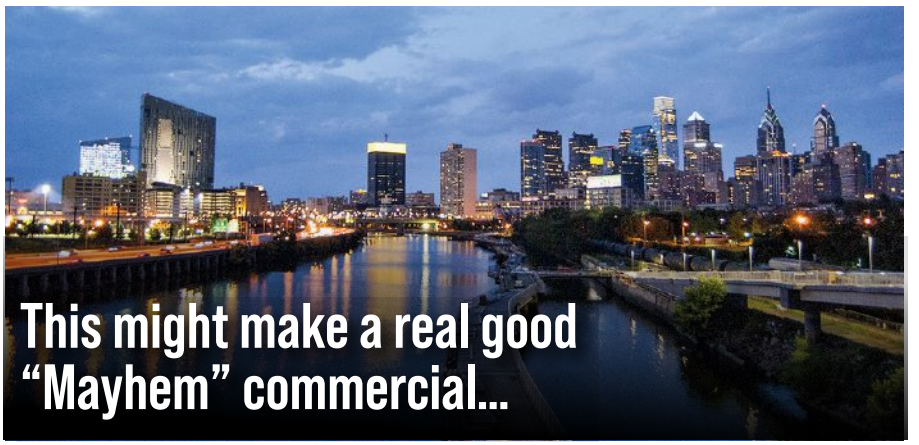

This might make a real good "Mayhem" commercial...

On a recent morning, Philadelphia police responded to an unusual incident on the Schuylkill River. An amorous couple parked in a vehicle on Kelly Drive had accidentally plunged into the river near the Columbia Bridge around 4:30 a.m. Police say a man and woman were engaging in sexual activity in the backseat when the woman accidentally disengaged the gear, causing the vehicle to roll right into the water. Fortunately, both the man and woman were able to escape safely with no injuries. The vehicle, believed to be a Land or Range Rover®, was pulled from the water around 9:00 a.m. ("*And it's a half past four and I'm shiftin' gears*...")

She got the idea from a video she watched on Ewe Tube… A 42-year-old woman from St. Paul, Minnesota, was arrested for livestock theft. Officers were alerted to the woman when she and a man were seen walking a sheep and a dog on leashes. Bower told them that she purchased the sheep for $200, but her companion ratted her out: He confessed that she had stepped over a farm fence, put a leash on the sheep and pulled it out through an opening in the fence. When police checked with the farm owner, they found out that the woman had not paid for the animal, a breeding ram worth about $500. The woman's tattoo might have given her away: Her face has a sheep inked on her left cheek. (*Well, I guess all's wool that ends wool.*)

Well, there goes the neighborhood – literally… You can't take it with you which means you should be very careful what you leave behind. A real estate agent in Salinas, California, got a real scare when, while preparing the home of a recently deceased man for an estate sale, they discovered a 2.5 foot long High Explosive Anti-Tank (H.E.A.T.) missile among the man's belongings in a closet. As the neighborhood was evacuated to a radius of 500 feet by the Salinas police, a neighbor interacted with an officer on scene, "He showed me the X-ray of the missile which is really wild. He said, 'See how it's all dark? That means there's a lot of stuff in it.'" The Monterey County Sheriff's Explosive Ordinance Unit successfully removed the weapon from the residence without incident. (*The poor guy might have been saving it for his next confrontation with the HOA.*)

I wasn't stealing it, I was just taking it out for a test drive… Police were dispatched to a local Target store in Flagler, Florida, after a manager said a man had walked out of the store without paying for a $539 electric scooter. Logic would compel most normal thieves who had just shoplifted an expensive scooter to resort to one of several different techniques to flee the crime scene. However, as a deputy approached the suspect, he was still working to assemble the scooter in front of the Target in plain view. Law enforcement officers showed him another means of mobility – a ride to the local jail in a police car. (*He probably also picked up a few tools from the hardware section to move things along.*)

Not smarter than the average bear… Four people in Lake Arrow, California, were arrested and accused of insurance fraud after they claimed their car was trashed by a bear – which was actually someone in a bear costume. The alleged bear was claimed to have entered and damaged a 2010 Rolls-Royce Ghost while it was parked in the San Bernardino Mountains northeast of Los Angeles. Video was submitted to the insurance company which alleged to show the animal entering the car. State insurance officials stated, "Upon further scrutiny of the video, the investigation determined the bear was actually a person in a bear costume." The bear costume, with brown fur, a head shaped like a bear, paws and metal hand tools to help simulate claw marks, was found in the suspects' home. Video of the alleged damage showed what appeared to be minor groove marks on seats and in the interior which were intended to pass for claw marks. Investigators also showed the videos to a biologist who "surmised it was clearly a human in a bear suit," the insurance department said. ("*Only YOU can prevent insurance fraud.*")

Well, the sign shouldn't have said, "FINE FOR PARKING"… The mystery of an SUV seen perched on top of a Florida dumpster was revealed to have involved a poorly timed parking job, a construction site and a forklift. A Florida man said he was on his way to the store when he spotted the vehicle parked on top of a dumpster in Fort Myers. "I had to do a double take. I texted my buddy. I'm like, 'Is that fair game? Is that free?' It's in the dumpster," he told a local TV station. It turned out that the SUV had been moved onto the dumpster by a forklift operated by a construction worker helping to build a new apartment complex. Workers said the vehicle had been left parked in a work area. "Sometimes when you park where you're not supposed to, this is what happens," a construction worker said. The vehicle was later removed from the dumpster and relocated to a parking space away from the area. (*Park around and find out!*)

How do you say "I've just come from Costco" in Spanish?... US Customs and Border Protection shuts down smuggling attempts on a daily basis, but its officers were surprised by a recent attempt to smuggle contraband in Presidio, Texas. While inspecting a vehicle being driven into the US, CBP personnel discovered 748 pounds of Mexican bologna. Forty rolls of the deli meat were hidden in a number of suitcases throughout the vehicle. The CBP Presidio Port Director said that "the concern with pork products is that they have the potential to introduce foreign animal diseases that can have devastating effects to the US economy and to our agriculture industry." (*Did the bologna have a first name*?) P&SN

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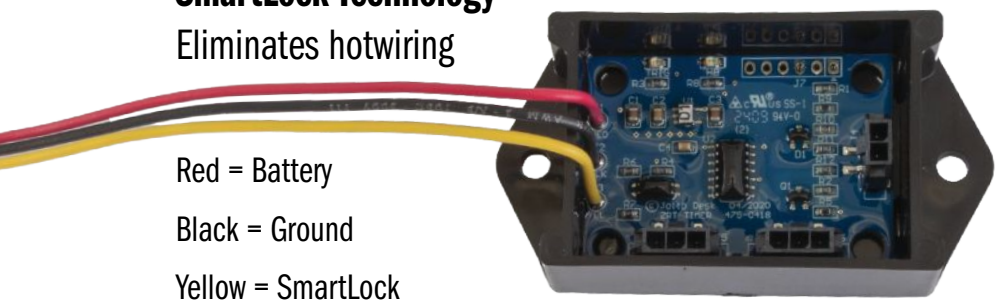

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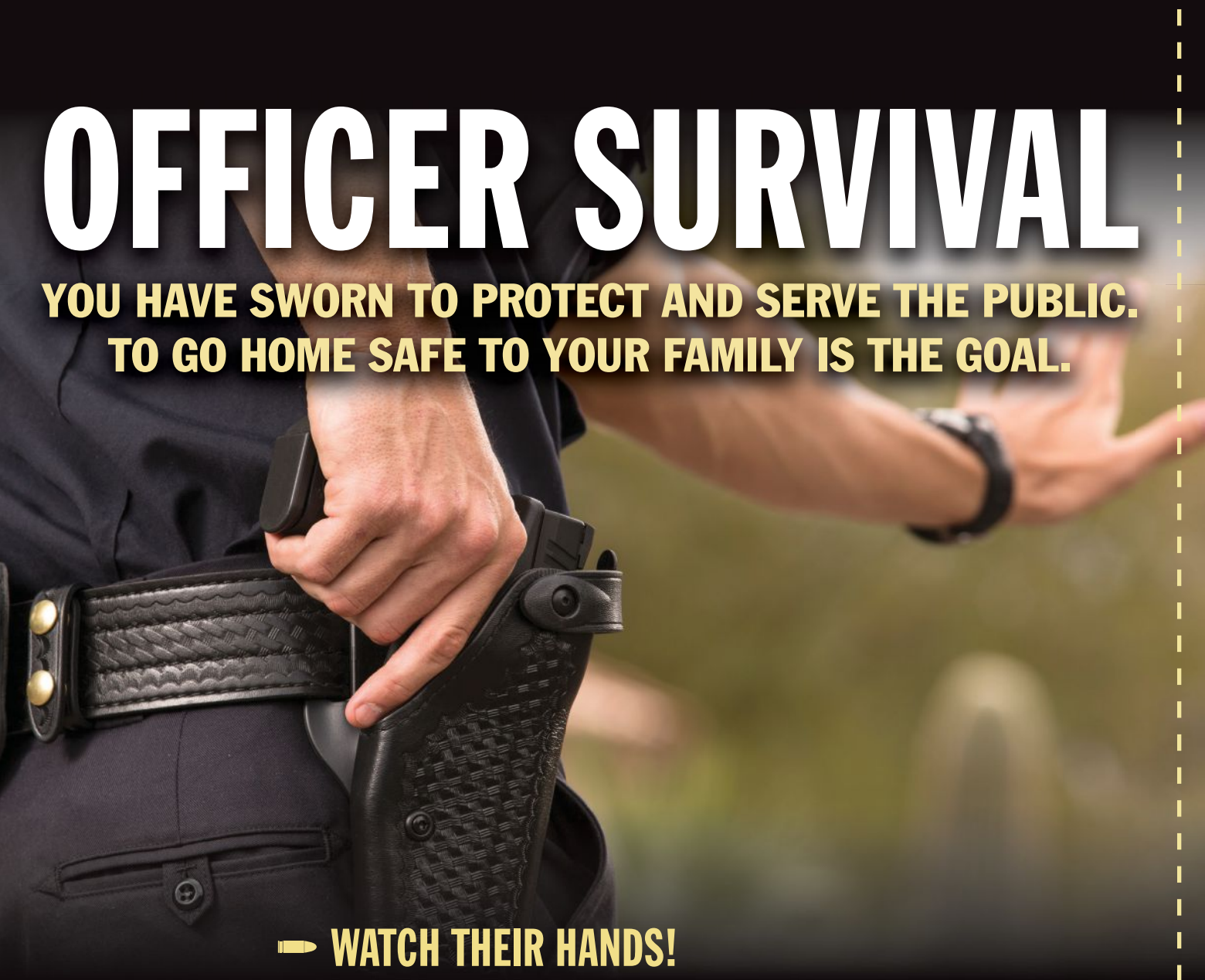

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